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CHURCHES
OF
NEW-HAMPSHIRE:

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE,

**DELIVERED BEFORE THE
GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF NEW-HAMPSHIRE,**

LITTLETON, SEPT. 11, 1876,

**AT
BY
PROF. E. D. SANBORN.**

**BRISTOL, N. H.:
PRINTED BY R. W. MUSGROVE.
1876.**

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LAWRENCE S. TRACY

DISCOURSE.

Church and state are among the most significant and comprehensive words in the English language. Their etymology connects the apostolic age with our own. Their history includes almost everything that was worthy of record, since the advent of Christ. An exhaustive definition of the two words, would reveal to every human being, his whole duty as a citizen and Christian.

The conflicting claims of church and state have given birth to more battles, both with the sword and pen, than all other human interests combined. Christianity came to the Anglo-Saxons from Rome. The first missionaries, sent by pope Gregory, landed in Kent, A. D. 597 ; but, strange to say, the word "church" preceded them in its Northern march. It was first received by the Goths, on the lower Danube, from Constantinople ; and these Goths, who were converted to Christianity by Bishop Ulphilas, about A. D., 350, lent the word to other German tribes ; and among them, to the ancestors of the English Saxons.

"Church" is formed from an adjective derived from the Greek word "Kurios," and means, pertaining to the Lord ; or, when applied to an edifice, the house of the Lord. The old Saxons spelled it "circe," sounding the "c" like "k," which pronunciation the Scotch retain in their word "Kirk," and the Germans, in "Kirche." In its infancy it was an association of men who held like opinions, believed the same religious truths and entertained similar sentiments and feelings. Says Guizot : "The first Christians met together to enjoy their common emotions, their common religious convictions. At this time, we find no settled form of doctrine, no settled rules of discipline, no body of magistrates." They were morally governed by men among them of superior ability. But no society can long exist without rules. This union of believers had doctrines to teach, precepts to enforce, promises to promulgate ; hence, they formed an ecclesiastic-

tical government, choosing their most worthy men to preside in their assemblies, whom they named elders, overseers and deacons. At the beginning of the sixth century, the organization of the church was complete; and its ministers were importuned to assume temporal as well as spiritual power, because they were the best educated and most worthy men in every community.

From this period, for a thousand years, the church and the state became antagonistic; each sought to engross the entire wealth, power and magnificence of Christendom. Popes and kings contended, with tongue and pen; with bows and bills, for the right of investiture. Emperors could not appoint their own cabinets without the consent of the pope; and archbishops were often made royal chancellors and premiers. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, came the convulsions of the Reformation, which, like the explosion of a magazine, rent and shattered the walls of the stately structure which wily and ambitious priests had reared round the Christian church. Germany was, in consequence, devastated by war and drenched in blood; England was torn by civil dissensions in church and state; and, for three hundred years, men were oftener asking, with anxious solicitude, "what shall I believe?" rather than "what shall I do?" A host of contending sects arose, each claiming the exclusive right of dictating the public faith. Conservatives and reformers waged a war of extermination against each other. The victors retained and enjoyed the spoils; the vanquished submitted or emigrated.

Most of the American colonies were united by religious ties. Pilgrims and Puritans occupied New England. The Plymouth colony of Pilgrims was far less influential than that of the Puritans of Massachusetts. The latter colony has left the impress of her institutions on nearly one half the states of our Union. All the American colonies brought with them, in some form, the conviction that the state should support the church. In most of the new constitutions, religious tests were inserted. In New-Hampshire, to-day, a man can not legally hold any important office who is not of the protestant religion. "It belongs to American Liberty," says Lieber, "to separate entirely from the

political government, the institution which has for its object the support and diffusion of religion." This is, now, theoretically, true; but, it has required the labor of a whole century to undo the heavy burdens which the union of church and state imposed upon the people. In Massachusetts, the church was a spiritual Republic, and it was, for many years, the duty of the civil magistrate to execute its decrees. In the first Congress, held at Philadelphia, John Adams declared, "that a change in the solar system might be expected as soon as a change in the ecclesiastical system of Massachusetts." In all the old thirteen colonies, at the period of the Revolution, there existed an abiding conviction that the state should provide for the support of religion. The ablest divines in New England uttered such sentiments as these: "that in a flourishing and respectable civil state, the worship of God must be maintained;" "that the laws for maintaining public worship and decently supporting the teachers of religion are absolutely necessary to the well being of society;" "that the restraints of religion would be broken down, by leaving the subject of public worship to the humors of the multitude;" "that a government that should neglect to punish profaneness and impiety and provide for the support of the public worship of God, would be guilty of a daring affront to Heaven." Still later, even Judge Story, a Unitarian, doubted whether a free government can be permanent, where the public worship of God and the support of religion constitute no part of the policy or duty of the State."

At the beginning of the Revolution, the Congregationalists, though confined mostly to New England, were the most numerous and influential body of Christians. Their clergy were the standing order, were settled or dismissed by the major vote of the towns where they officiated, and were more reverenced by the people than the magistrates.* They numbered seven hun-

*President Quincy has written the following description of a scene at Andover, Mass., about the beginning of this century. It is Sunday morning. "The whole space before the meeting-house was filled with a waiting, respectful and expecting multitude. At the moment of service, the pastor (Rev. Jonathan French), issued from his mansion, with Bible and manuscript sermon under one arm and his wife leaning on the other flanked by his negro man, on his side, as his wife was by her negro woman, the little negroes being distributed according to their sex, by the side of their respective parents. Then followed every other member of the family, according to age and rank, making, often with family visitants a somewhat formidable procession. As soon as it appeared, the congregation, as if led by one spirit began to move towards the door of the church, and before the procession reached it, all were in their seats. As soon as the pastor entered, the whole congregation rose and stood until he was in the pulpit and his family seated."

dred churches. Their ministers were learned men, either graduates of Harvard and Yale or of foreign Universities. The Baptists ranked next in numbers. They were scattered through the colonies and were especially numerous in Virginia. They had about three hundred churches. They did not differ from the Congregationalists in church organization, nor in doctrine, except in the practice of immersion.* They discouraged an educated ministry, and held "that every brother that is qualified by God has a right to preach according to the measure of faith." The Church of England held the next place. It was the oldest religious body in the colonies. The wealth and social distinction of its members gave that denomination great power, especially in the Southern states. Their clergymen were, usually, ordained in the old country. The Revolution almost annihilated these churches by separating them from state support. In Virginia, Patrick Henry "hurled the hot thunderbolts of his wrath against the tithe gathering clergy," in New England, where congregationalism held exclusive sway, public sentiment discouraged its continuance.

The Presbyterians, at the Revolution, were almost as numerous as the Episcopalians, having about three hundred churches, chiefly in the Middle states. They had a strong and vigorous church government, a severe and rigid theology and a learned ministry. The prejudice in that church against written sermons was so great that, up to the close of the last century, "a man's reputation would be ruined, should his manuscript be seen." Several other denominations then existed, as the Dutch Reformed, the German Reformed and the Lutheran, each numbering about sixty churches. In 1776, the population of the colonies was estimated at three and a half millions, with less than two thousand churches, or one minister for seventeen hundred souls.

In 1870, the population had increased to thirty-eight millions,

*In the Baptist historical volume edited by Rev. Dr. Moss, we find what is probably as accurate an estimate of the strength of the denomination as can be had. The statistics given show that the Baptists have increased from 35,000 members in 1776, to 1,815,300 in 1875. Those in all other countries of the world only amount to a total of 400,000, nearly half of whom are in England. The increase has been most remarkable in the Southern States; for while the 4,500 in Massachusetts have increased to 45,000 in a hundred years, the 14,960 of Virginia are now 189,310, and the 428 of Georgia have grown to 174,543! Kentucky follows with 144,267, and North Carolina with 113,414; then come New York and Tennessee, nearly equal. Almost half the Baptists of the United States are found within six adjoining Southern States. They have now 80 educational institutions of all kinds, and 21,255 churches.

the churches to seventy-two thousand, or one for about five hundred of the population.

The denominations then ranked, in members, in the following order : 1, Methodists ; 2, Baptists ; 3, Presbyterians ; 4, Roman Catholics ; 5, Christians ; 6, Lutherans ; 7, Congregationalists ; 8, Protestant Episcopalians. Our own church, in a century, had fallen from the first to the seventh in rank. The aggregate sum of church property, owned by all denominations, was estimated, in 1870, at three hundred and fifty-four millions of dollars.* A tax, levied on this sum, would yield, to the several states, a large revenue. The property belonging to five hundred and forty-five colleges and other Institutions conferring degrees, would probably equal that owned by the churches ; and if libraries be included, would far exceed it. It is estimated that Cambridge college alone, would, if taxed, be obliged to pay to the state, sixty thousand dollars annually, a sum nearly equal to the entire income of the colony, when they founded the college, only ten years after their arrival in Boston. This fact shows what the church has done for New England ; for this college which has been the model of most of the colleges, since founded, was the offspring of the Puritan church. But it is not necessary, here and now, to speak of Pilgrims or Puritans. Their record is known wherever the muse of history has a worshiper ; I was about to say, wherever the sun shines or rain falls.

EARLY CHURCHES OF NEW-HAMPSHIRE.

The energetic proprietors of New-Hampshire and Maine were not moved to plant colonies in the wilderness to extend the area of freedom or promote the interests of religion, but to aggrandize their houses and increase their private fortunes. Mason and Gorges were not democrats but royalists ; not Puritans but cavaliers ; not Independents but Episcopalians. The men they hired to fell the trees, till the soil, fish, hunt and mine, in the new world, were not exiles for conscience' sake, but from love of gain. No provision was made by masters or servants for the preaching of the gospel. No man cared for their souls. The first churches were formed at Hampton and Exeter. Hampton

*The Statistics, here cited, are from a very able article, in the N. A. Review, for Jan., 1876.

claims precedence in time ; for, when the place was incorporated as a plantation, in 1635, some of the grantees were already "united together by church government." "The original members of the church and the first settlers of the town, generally, were Puritans ; many of them were from the county of Norfolk, England, where Christians of this class were very numerous." They brought a pastor with them. They soon erected a church of logs, where, literally shrouded "in a dim religious light," they paid their vows to the Most High. The first pastor of this first-born church of a new state, and the father of the town, was Rev. Stephen Bachiler, an ancestor, on the mother's side, of Daniel Webster. The settlement at Exeter, the same year, began its existence by the organizing of a church and the founding of a state. Eight members of the church of Boston followed Rev. John Wheelwright in his compulsory exile, and at once formed themselves into the first church of Exeter. These were all Calvinists of the straitest sect. Thus the leaven of Puritanism was hidden in two of the four rising towns of New-Hampshire ; and in process of time, through the influence of Massachusetts, the whole lump was leavened. The History of the New-Hampshire Churches, by Rev. R. F. Lawrence, gives a graphic account of the origin of the first church in Portsmouth. I will quote a passage : " 'Therefore, Honorable and worthy countrymen,' said Captain Smith to the New-Hampshire colonists, 'let not the meanness of the word *fish* distaste you, for it will afford you as good gold as the mines of Potosi, with less hazard and charge, and more certainty and facility.' This discloses, in the briefest manner, the origin of Portsmouth, for that lofty and self-forgetting devotion to great principles which baptized many of the early settlements lining the New England coast never set its seal on the brow of Strawberry Bank. The first colonists, fishmongers of London, more intent on trade than religion, arrived three years after the Pilgrims at Plymouth. They first settled at Little Harbor, nor was it until seven years that houses began to dot the ridge which ran along from Pitts street to Chapel Hill, then called 'the Bank.' Here the church, with its wholesome discipline and heavenly comforts, found no early home. Though a chapel and parsonage seem to have been

built, no regular provision was made for a settled ministry until 1640, when twenty of the inhabitants deeded to some church wardens fifty acres for a glebe." The first preacher was Richard Gibson. "He was wholly addicted to the hierarchy and discipline of England, and exercised his ministerial function according to the ritual." He remained in office but a short time, and was succeeded by several temporary preachers till the people built a new meeting-house, and, in 1658, called and settled Rev. Joshua Moodey from Massachusetts. He was a devout, earnest and impressive preacher; yet the original tendencies of the colonists were so strong that it required thirteen years of assiduous labor for him to gather a church. Finally, in 1661, the civil authorities invited several churches to assist in the formation of the first church in Portsmouth, and "in the ordination of officers therein."

Dover was settled in 1623; after the lapse of seven years, only three houses had been erected. Its progress was very slow for ten years, and, during all that time, there was no public religious instruction. After the territory passed into the hands of Puritan owners, they sent out from the west of England some colonists "of good estate and of some account for religion," and with them a minister of their own faith. William Leveridge, an Oxford graduate, "an able and worthy Puritan minister," came to Dover in 1633, and remained about two years; then, for want of adequate support, removed to Boston. He was succeeded by George Burdett, a churchman, politician and an intriguing demagogue. His popular talents made him governor, and, in that capacity, he opened a correspondence with Archbishop Laud, the bitter enemy of the Puritans. He not only deceived the people over whom he ruled, but violated the laws he had sworn to execute. He committed a heinous crime, in consequence of which he left the Plantation and went to Agamenticus, in Maine. In July, 1638, Hanserd Knollys, a graduate of Cambridge, came to Boston. He had received episcopal ordination, but had joined the Puritan party. At the invitation of "some of the more religious," he came to Dover. Dr. Quint thus states the condition of affairs when he arrived:

"When Knollys came to Dover, in 1638, he found a settlement origi-

nated under Episcopal auspices, though enlarged under other influences ; a people mixed in their character, none of them emigrants for conscience' sake, and none of them Puritans of the Bay type ; the settlement a refuge for men who could not endure the Massachusetts rigor ; no church organized after fifteen years of colonial life, and a minister who, in spirit a churchman, was corresponding with Archbishop Laud, and who was supported by a portion of the people. 'Of some of the best minded' Knollys gathered a church. But it was in the midst of a people who had generally no love for Puritanism. Burdett left the town, but 'another churchman,' Larkham, came in, and by appealing to the looser elements succeeded in superseding Knollys."

Such was the origin of the first four churches of New-Hampshire.

CONGREGATIONALISM IN NEW-HAMPSHIRE.

The first ministers of New-Hampshire, as before stated, were settled by major vote of the town in which they officiated. This mode of settlement continued till 1819, when the rights of other denominations were acknowledged, and church and state, or rather town and state, were separated. The number of Congregational and Presbyterian churches now in the state is one hundred ninety-four ; only six of these are Presbyterian. Sixty-nine towns have no clergyman belonging to either of these two denominations. The Methodists and Baptists are annually gaining upon the Congregationalists, and probably will soon equal them in the number of churches though they will scarcely equal them in membership during the present century. The Methodists now have one hundred twenty-three churches ; the Freewill Baptists one hundred twenty-one. The original Baptists number thirty-five. Of the other ten denominations that are established in the state, the number ranges from one to twenty-two churches.

The early ministers of the Congregational order were men of mark in their respective towns, thoroughly educated and well grounded in the doctrines of the so-called orthodox theology. The first convention of Congregational ministers was held at Exeter, July 20, 1747. Their object was to promote harmony, peace and good order among the churches ; and to secure unity of belief and efficiency of action among the ministers of the province. Seventeen clergymen obeyed the summons, which

was issued by a private conference of a few leading men. At their first meeting they deemed it inexpedient to make any declaration of faith with respect to points of doctrine. They reached, in part, that result negatively, by enumerating the prevailing theological errors of the day. They resolved, First, "That we will, to the best of our ability, both in our public ministrations and private conversations, maintain and promote the great and important doctrines of the Gospel, according to the form of sound words delivered to us by Christ and his apostles;" Second, "That we will take particular notice of several doctrinal errors which have more remarkably discovered themselves of late in several places, among some persons who would seem zealous of religion: 1st, That saving faith is nothing but a persuasion that Christ died for me, in particular; 2d, That morality is not of the essence of Christianity; 3d, That God sees no sin in His children; 4th, That believers are justified from eternity; 5th, That no unconverted person can understand the meaning of the Scriptures; 6th, That sanctification is no evidence of justification; and that we will be very frequent in opposing these errors and in inculcating those truths with which they militate." They also agree to discourage uneducated men from entering the ministry, and to oppose all unwarrantable intrusion by persons who are not legally authorized to exercise the functions of a minister. They also advise frequent visits and interchange of views among pastors, and to withhold recommendations from all candidates who are not licensed by some association. They appointed a committee to confer with the church in Durham respecting some reported disorder among its members. At an adjourned meeting the committee reported that a portion of the church had separated from the original organization and were holding meetings at which very disorderly, vile and absurd things were practiced, such as "profane singing and dancing, damning the devil, spitting in the faces of persons whom they apprehended not to be of their society, and other similar acts to the dishonor of God and scandal of religion." They were unable then, to gain a hearing from the separatists.

In 1750, they opened a correspondence with English Congre-

gationalists. They are called by them "Brethren of the Dissenting Interest in England." An interesting correspondence followed, revealing a strong sympathy between the English Dissenters and the New-Hampshire Congregationalists.

At their annual meeting at Hampton, September 25, 1754, they discussed the proper subjects to be enforced in their respective pulpits. They agreed to preach once a quarter upon the following subjects: 1st, Carelessness in religion; 2d, Family religion and government; 3d, Sabbath breaking; 4th, Intemperance; and on the day of the annual Fast to inculcate as many of these important subjects as possible.

At the annual meeting at Somersworth, September 26, 1758, they petitioned Governor Benning Wentworth to grant a charter for a college, setting forth at large the necessity and utility of such an institution, and expressing the belief that a fund could be raised in the state for the support of the necessary officers. They concluded their memorial by saying: "We are persuaded that if your Excellency will, first of all, favor us with such a charter, we shall be able soon to make use of it for the public benefit; and that your Excellency's name will forever be remembered with honor." By neglecting to grant this reasonable request, the governor lost his only chance of honorable remembrance by posterity. At the same meeting, it was voted that the convention should, for the future, be held annually at Portsmouth, and should be known by the name of the "Convention of Ministers at Portsmouth." The number in attendance was usually about twenty.

In September, 1761, the convention, by their committee, congratulated George III. on his accession to the English throne. The address is remarkable for its loyalty, beginning thus: "We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, ministers of the Congregational churches in and about Portsmouth, the principal town of your Majesty's Province of New-Hampshire, beg leave, from these remote parts of your dominions, upon the first opportunity of our convening, to present before the throne this humble testimony of our loyal duty and affection to your Majesty, whose accession to the British crown gives the highest joy and satisfaction to all his subjects." The whole address is most

laudatory of his Majesty's character and conduct, and full of warm congratulations on the late success of the British arms. Ten years later, the same body would have been as eloquent in complaints, and as eager to be released from his Majesty's sway as they were at first to welcome it. It is a little singular that such bold and manly advocates of the moral virtues should have indulged in such extravagant compliments to their new sovereign. However, it was the fault of the times. The elder Pitt himself used more fulsome flattery to George III. than his warmest friends were wont to employ; and was constantly casting himself, metaphorically, at the feet of his king.

But we have changed all that. Our age has lost its reverence for official station. At a meeting in July, 1762, a testimonial to the excellent character and remarkable labors of the Rev. Eleazar Wheelock, in founding and supporting Moor's Charity School, in Lebanon, Conn., signed by twenty-five clergymen of that state, was laid before the convention. They say: "We esteem his plan (of educating Indians) to be good; his measures prudently and well concerted; his endowments peculiar, his zeal fervent, his endeavors indefatigable for the accomplishment of this design, and we know no man like-minded who will naturally care for their state. May God prolong his life and make him extensively useful in the kingdom of Christ."

They also give unequivocal testimony to the fidelity, honesty and economy of the Rev. Eleazar Wheelock in managing the funds committed to his care for the education of the Indians. The New-Hampshire convention cordially approved of his work, and recommended it to the good will of churches under their care. They did not, however, attempt to dictate to the public how they should dispose of their contributions for education. They mention "the corporation erected in the Province of Massachusetts Bay" (meaning Harvard College) as claiming their benefactions as fully as the school in Connecticut, designed to educate the aborigines. In September, 1770, the convention sent a memorial to the general assembly, asking aid for missionary labor among the new settlements of the province. They say, in closing their memorial: "It appears to your memorialists that, in many respects, it will be of great advantage to his

Majesty's government, as well as for the benefit of particular properties, and the encouragement of the settlers in the new townships, that some provision be speedily made, whereby the knowledge of Christianity and a sense of their duty to God, their King and Author, may be preserved among those scattered inhabitants of 'the wilderness.' John Wentworth was then governor of the province. The very presentation of such a memorial, with the expectation of aid for itinerant missionaries in the new settlements, reveals the paternal regard which the General Assembly was supposed to entertain for the religious welfare of the people. Such a communication addressed to the legislature at this day would be regarded as entirely irrelevant and possibly hostile to their duties as law-makers. It would at once raise the cry of union of church and state.

In September, 1772, the convention voted to have a collection among themselves, for pious and charitable uses, at their annual meetings. The first collection yielded two pounds seven shillings and six pence, lawful money. This money, with such other contributions as might be made during the year, was appropriated to the education of Mr. Ewer's son, if he should be found by their committee, Doctors Langdon, Haven and Stevens, to be worthy of their charity. Before the adjournment, nine shillings and seven pence more were added to the first collection. In the year 1774, Rev. Samuel Langdon, of Portsmouth, was appointed president of Harvard college. An address of congratulation was prepared by a committee, and presented to the reverend Doctor; also filed among their records. They say in that address, "From the long and intimate connection that has subsisted between us, we think we have reason to expect that your appointment to this honorable station will be an extensive blessing to the country. The prospect of this is sufficient to overbalance that regret which we feel at your removal from our neighborhood." A very devout and grateful response was made by Doctor Langdon, and the record of these transactions is signed by the venerable Jeremy Belknap, as clerk. These facts show us that, at that early day, in the little province of New-Hampshire, there were learned and illustrious ministers of the gospel.

In 1785, we find the following record : "Whereas the civil government appear, at present, disposed to introduce the annual public election by a public religious service, we think it our duty to countenance that laudable disposition of our civil fathers, * * * therefore, voted *unanimously*, that we will, by the leave of Providence, endeavor to meet together on the day of the next election, wherever said election may be, and so on from year to year, and that our brethren of every denomination be invited, by public advertisement, to meet with us on said day." This seems to have given their sanction to the annual election sermons, which were delivered by the most distinguished clergymen of the state, and frequently published, for many years before and after this date.

This abstract of record shows how the clergy of New-Hampshire were employed during the last century. It reveals their creed, conduct and character. It shows, 1st, That they were decided champions of dogmatic theology, and the uncompromising opponents of heresy; 2d, That they were the devoted friends of education; 3d, That they preached morality as an essential element of true religion; 4th, That they appropriated four Sabbaths besides the annual Fast day, to national sins; 5th, That they were, in that day, advisers and counselors of the legislature, as well as petitioners for righteous laws; 6th, That they encouraged the home missionary enterprise, in behalf of the new settlements in the state; 7th, That they, by word and deed, were the leading men of the community, in every measure that appertained to the highest welfare of the people; 8th, That they were almost the only literary men of that period; and that some of them, like Jeremy Belknap and President Langdon, were authors of high repute.

Hon. Joseph B. Walker, of Concord, describing the ministry in New-Hampshire a hundred years ago, says :

"The old New-Hampshire minister was almost invariably a well educated man. The expression, common in the old town charters, 'a learned orthodox minister,' was by no means a conventional one merely. It appears, upon examination, that of the fifty-two settled ministers in the province in 1764, no less than forty-eight were graduates of colleges; while, in the County of Rockingham, thirty-one of the thirty-

two, and perhaps all, had received a liberal education—one at the university of Scotland, one at Yale, and twenty-nine at Harvard.

In 1760, with a population of about 65,000 souls, sixty-eight ministers were registered. A century later, with a population of 315,000, we find 545 churches of all denominations, 194 of the Congregational and Presbyterian order, with 140 active ministers. The whole number of Congregational ministers, who have officiated in the state from its first settlement is 1206.

RISE OF SEPARATE DENOMINATIONS.

As late as 1750, there were only thirty churches of the standing order. Other denominations were then but little known. This fact reveals the slow progress of religion in the state. A small society of Quakers was organized in 1701. The first Baptist church was formed in 1755. Their gain, on an average, till the year 1800, was about one new church annually. An Episcopal chapel was built in Portsmouth* as early as 1638. In May, 1640, a grant of fifty acres of land "for a glebe" was set apart by the governor and inhabitants of Strawberry Bank, and deeded "to Thomas Walford and Henry Sherburne, church wardens, and their successors forever, as feoffees, in trust." A parsonage and the chapel had been previously erected upon the glebe. The prayer-books and communion service were sent over by Captain Mason. The first company who settled at Portsmouth and Dover, were inclined to Episcopacy. Winthrop says: "Some of them were the professed enemies to the ways of our churches." Prior to the beginning of this century, but few Episcopal churches existed in this state. The Methodist were first known in New-Hampshire in 1792. They did not come to New England till after the close of the Revolutionary war.

*About sixty years ago, President Timothy Dwight, of Yale college, Connecticut, visited Portsmouth, and states in his Book of Travels that the number of dwellings was six hundred and twenty-six, although he thinks that Newmarket was united with it in the enumeration as one district. He says almost all were built of wood. Their contiguity to each other in the compact part of the town he thought very dangerous if fires should occur, as the conflagration might become extensive. But up to that time Portsmouth had not suffered much by fire. We think that not more than a dozen dwellings had been burned, so far as any record appears, and a few other buildings. The jail had been burned, but we have not the date.

President Dwight died in 1817. Before his death he had occasion to learn what ruin fire had caused in this town. That of 1813 was terrible. The light of it was seen twenty-five or thirty miles back in the country.

Sixty years ago there were seven places of worship; now there are ten. One society that existed then, the Sandemanian, has become extinct. Another, the independent, has also ceased. The Universalist society was then in its infancy, and small. The Methodists had not commenced a stated meeting then. Rev. Doctors Buckminster and Parker were in the full tide of prosperity as pastors of the two Congregational churches. Rev. Hosea Ballou, afterwards very prominent among the Universalists, was preaching to the society of that denomination in this place."

The Freewill Baptists originated in 1780. Elder Benjamin Randall, of New Durham, is their reputed founder; but there is another claimant for this honor. John Shepard, Esq., of Gilmanton, solemnly affirmed, near the close of his life, "that the Freewill system was all opened to his mind by the spirit of God, months before any other person knew it; that he then revealed it, in March, 1780, to Elder Edward Locke and Elder Tozar Lord; and with them spent a week locked up in the house owned by Mr. Piper, of Louden, fasting and praying and seeking the will of God." He also affirmed that they ordained one another; and then went to New Durham and ordained Elder Randall. From this humble origin, the number of the denomination has been constantly increasing. It now has schools, academies, theological seminaries and a college under its control in New England.

The first Universalist society in the state was established at Portsmouth, in 1781. The Christian denomination arose about the beginning of this century. Elder Abner Jones from Vermont is its reputed founder. It is an off-shoot from the Freewill Baptists and is quite numerous in New-Hampshire. There are within the state two families of Shakers, who date their arrival here in 1792.

Fifty years ago* these numerous denominations were very hostile to each other; and much of the preaching of that day was given to sectarian controversies. A better day has dawned upon us; and as partisan zeal is abated, brotherly love has increased.

From 1775 to 1800, the people were so deeply agitated with the Revolution, the new constitution and other great political questions, that religion scarcely occupied their thoughts. There were faithful preachers and devout hearers in those days, but they were a small minority. The Revolutionary war was, in itself, disastrous to religion; but the alliance with France was still more injurious. The opinions of Voltaire found many ad-

*"When Dr. Dwight assumed the presidency of Yale College, there was scarcely a church member among the students, and they were generally proud to wear the names of the French infidels in honor of their assaults upon Christianity. Then, in 1776, there were neither Sunday Schools, nor children's books. There were no religious newspapers; and it was a piece of impertinence to publish religious intelligence in secular journals. There were no foreign missions, and very little of our modern home missionary and home evangelization work".

herents among the officers of the army. The works of Godwin and Thomas Paine were also read with eagerness by the young skeptics of the age. Unbelief became popular, and faithful followers of Christ were pointed at "with the finger of scorn." Near the close of the eighteenth century, revivals of religion became more frequent, the results of them more permanent; and "the churches had rest and were edified." The New-Hampshire Missionary Society, which has been of inestimable advantage in providing the preaching of the gospel for feeble churches and sparse populations, was founded in 1801.

THE TOLERATION ACT.

The Great Teacher said: "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Whether the first settlers at Little Harbor and Northam attempted both does not clearly appear; but it is manifest that these representatives of the Laconia Company were not exiles for conscience' sake. They did not come into the wilderness to found churches, but to catch fish, work mines, buy furs, fell trees, and till the soil. The woods and the waters yielded tribute to their industry. The religious element was more strongly developed in Hampton and Exeter, but so long as these four towns made their own laws, the state took precedence of the church. The reverse was true of Massachusetts; and when, in 1641, a political union was effected between these plantations and the colony of Massachusetts, they were exempted from religious tests and allowed an equitable representation in the legislative assembly. During the entire early history of New-Hampshire there was greater freedom of individual opinion, and a more liberal toleration of differences in religion prevailed than in the other New England colonies. Still, that deep-seated conviction which had been the growth and habit of centuries in the old world, that it was the duty of the state to uphold the church, led the people of New-Hampshire to sustain divine worship by law, and to build churches and support a Christian ministry by general taxation. The majority of the colonists were Congregationalists, and the ministers of that denomination were legally constituted "the standing order" in the state. The towns were

empowered by the early legislators, in accordance with the provisions of an English law, to raise money for the support of the gospel; and the people, in town meeting assembled, voted for their spiritual teachers, and assessed themselves for their support. The rise of other religious denominations in the state created great dissatisfaction with this law. They were often compelled to aid in the building of churches which they never entered, to pay for preaching which they never heard, and to support a creed which they did not believe. The Bill of Rights declares "that no person of any particular religious sect or denomination shall ever be compelled to pay towards the support of a teacher or teachers of another persuasion, sect or denomination; and that no subordination of one sect or denomination shall ever be established by law." This plain provision was evaded by requiring a man who refused to pay his tax for the legally appointed clergyman to prove that he belonged to another denomination. This was not always possible to be done. Those who were utterly indifferent to all creeds and "cared for none of these things" were compelled, sometimes by a legal process and constraint of their goods, to contribute to the support of preaching in their respective towns. But one denomination of Christians was recognized by law, till near the beginning of the present century. Prior to 1807, several denominations, by legislative enactments, secured an independent existence, and from that time were no longer "molested" by the collector of taxes. Soon after the accession of Governor Bell to the gubernatorial chair in 1819, the subject was brought before the legislature. The toleration bill met with strenuous opposition. The advocates of the measure could plead the example of other states in relaxing the bonds of uniformity. Connecticut had recently separated church and state with manifest benefit both to morality and religion.

Dr. Lyman Beecher, in his autobiography, speaking of the condition of the "standing order" in that state, says: "The habit of legislation, from the beginning, had been to favor the Congregational order and provide for it. Congregationalism was the established religion. All others were dissenters and complained of favoritism. The ambitious minority early began

to make use of the minor sects, on the ground of invidious distinctions, thus making them restive. So the democracy, as it rose, included nearly all minor sects." The good Doctor labored first with Herculean energy to uphold this time-honored relation of church and state; and, after it was legally annulled, he worked with equal energy to establish the voluntary system. He succeeded, as many other eminent men have done, in refuting his own cherished opinions. When the crisis of separation of church and state had passed, he wrote: "It was as dark a day as ever I saw. The odium thrown upon the ministry was inconceivable. The injury done to the cause of Christ, as we supposed, was irreparable. For several days I suffered what no tongue can tell *for the best thing that ever happened to the state of Connecticut.* It cut the churches loose from dependence on state support. It threw them wholly on their own resources and on God. They say ministers have lost their influence; the fact is, they have gained." In another place, he writes: "The effect when it did come, was just the reverse of the expectation. When the storm burst upon us, indeed, we thought we were dead for a while. Our fears magnified the danger. We were thrown on God and on ourselves, and this created that moral coercion which makes men work. Before, we had been standing on what our fathers had done; but now we were obliged to develop our own energy. The other denominations lost all the advantages they had had before, so that the very thing in which the enemy said, 'raze it, raze it to the foundations,' laid the corner-stone of our prosperity to all generations." *A similar state of feeling prevailed among the clergy of New-Hampshire. They regarded the Toleration Act as a "repeal of the Christian religion," or an "abolition of the Bible;" but when it was once passed, all parties pronounced it a good and wholesome law. Its enforcement was productive of little positive evil and of the highest positive good.

In the unlimited freedom of religious belief which we now enjoy, we can hardly conceive of the persecutions which those who opposed the standing order, suffered in all the New Eng-

*Dr. Beecher wrote doggerel rhymes and published them, in ridicule of *Toleration*. As late as 1820, Ex-president Adams expressed great doubt of the expediency of the Connecticut Toleration Act.

land states, except Rhode Island, up to the beginning of the present century. Episcopacy in England was not more closely wedded to the state than was Congregationalism in Massachusetts. The union was a part of the organic law of the state. In 1834, the Bill of Rights was so altered as to discharge the legislature from all supervision of religion and to separate, forever, the church from the state. Prior to that time, although the laws allowed dissenters from the established order to prove their connection with some other church and receive back the taxes collected of them for the support of Congregationalism, still, with a large majority favoring the dominant party, they rarely succeeded in their suits; for the ablest lawyers in the state were employed by both parties, and they often pleaded before prejudiced juries, and, possibly, before an orthodox court. In 1774, eighteen members of a Baptist Society in Royalston, Mass., were imprisoned in Northampton jail for non-payment of minister's rates, although their legal connection with another church was duly certified. As late as 1770, a tax of four pence a year was required, by law, of every Baptist, exempted from supporting the standing order, as an acknowledgement of the power of the Legislature to tax them; and that, too, by the very men who refused to pay three pence a pound tax on tea, to acknowledge England's power to tax the colonies. During the great awakening, in New England, there arose a class of Puritans among Congregationalists, who objected to the half-way covenant, then in vogue, which admitted members to the churches without sufficient evidence of piety, and, strange to say, in 1774, in Connecticut, the goods of men were distrained, and they were cast into prison for refusing to pay for the support of preachers whose ministrations they could not conscientiously attend. In New-Hampshire, a man could avoid paying taxes for the support of a minister he did not approve, by proving that he belonged to another denomination, and this was both difficult and vexatious to be done. Roger Williams established perfect freedom of conscience in Rhode Island. Some disabilities, for a time, were laid upon Catholics; with this single exception, all men were allowed to worship as they pleased, and to pay what they pleased for the support of religion. The world owes to

Roger Williams a debt that has never been properly acknowledged. We may adopt the closing words of Whittier's address to him :

"Still echo, in the hearts of men
The words that thou hast spoken;
No forge of hell can weld again
The fetters thou hast broken."

It is but just to the Puritans, however, to say that the tendency of history for the last fifty years, is to justify the banishment of Roger Williams from Massachusetts. Mr Bancroft and Mr. Palfrey have given reasons for his removal from the plantation, as a disturber of the public peace. Dr. Dexter has recently written a volume vindicating the Puritans and showing that Williams, as a young man, was rash, wilful and contemptuous of authority; and, therefore, not to be tolerated by the Puritans, whose infant Republic could not bear the shock of civil or religious dissensions. "Salus populi, suprema est lex."

During the first two centuries of the history of our state, ministers, like Paul, often labored with their own hands. They owned farms, cultivated them and derived much of their support from them. Men who labored most of the time, during the week days, preached three sermons on the Sabbath and held several religious services during the week. But it must be remembered that the flocks they fed had little knowledge, religious or scientific and were much more easily satisfied than communities at the present day. The people now demand more elaborate discourses and more finished oratory. Manual labor, in early times, was necessary to eke out the salaries of pastors. The towns often gave farms to their ministers, as a part of their yearly stipend. They received, at the beginning of this century, from two to five hundred dollars a year; but much of this was paid in produce; and the assessments made upon people of small means, were often remitted by the ministers. Only fifty years ago, five hundred dollars made a handsome salary for a teacher or pastor. In 1835, the professors in Dartmouth college received only seven hundred dollars a year, and they could purchase as many comforts with that sum as they can now with two thousand dollars. Again, ministers of to-day have less sectarian warfare than those of a century or even a half century ago. The great philanthropic reforms have brought denominations nearer to-

gether ; and while warring against a common foe, they have forgotten sectarian feuds. Hence, *duties* are more enforced now than *doctrines*. Science is now the most formidable pulpit foe.

Intemperance is far less prevalent than formerly. It was once common in the churches ; now, it scarcely exists at all among professors of religion. When the temperance reform began, it was not safe, in many places, to introduce the subject into the pulpit. About the year 1830, Rev. Mr. Kingsbury of Mont Vernon, passing, one day, near where a company of citizens was building a new road, overtook one of his deacons carrying two pails full of mixed liquor to the laborers. The deacon advised his pastor to go on the old road, because the workmen were so drunk that there was danger of their insulting him. Intemperance caused more church discipline than all other immoralities combined. In country towns of one thousand inhabitants, a hogshead of new rum was often sold in a week, by one merchant. In North Hampton, in a population of six hundred and fifty souls, forty hogsheads of rum were sold at one store every year.

Rev. Jonathan French was settled there in 1801. He found the custom of catechising the children was laid aside, family instruction in religion was neglected ; there was no Sunday school ; few attended the sacramental lecture ; there were no prayer-meetings and a weekly lecture attracted very few hearers. Probably this description would apply, at that date, to a majority of country churches in New-Hampshire. Dr. Thayer, an eminent divine labored thirty-six years in Kingston, with no special revival and left a church, at his death, of only fifteen members. Deacon Stevens was the only male member on the list. Rev. Isaac Smith labored forty-three years in Gilmanton, and added one hundred and fourteen members to his church during that long ministry, but there was no special revival. When Rev. Isaiah Potter was settled at Lebanon, in 1772, it was said that there were not ten revival preachers in the state. During the ministry of Rev. Mr. Bradstreet in Chester, from 1793 to 1815, the church diminished from thirty male members to eleven, which caused a quarrel and a separation between the pastor and his people. During the ministry of the learned and eloquent

Dr. Langdon, for seventeen years, in Hampton Falls, only eleven were received to the church on profession of their faith. Such cases of declension were common in those days. About the year 1830, protracted meetings began to be held, from three to twenty days, in most of the towns of New-Hampshire. They performed a work similar to that of the Young Men's Christian Association in our day. "And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily."

Some of those churches that once flourished have declined or become extinct. The reasons and results of this mournful fact, I quote, in substance, from the pen of the able and efficient Secretary of the New-Hampshire Missionary Society. They have become poor that others through their poverty might be made rich. They have been not less, but more fruitful than others. They have educated a noble band of the best Christian workers of the time; but these have left the old altars and firesides to do their work elsewhere. It is a sad and yet a glorious tale that they will tell you, as you go from one town to another. They are bereft of their sons, but they have no occasion to mourn; they are cast down but not destroyed. The town of Colebrook furnished the colonists that settled Beloit and made it, with its flourishing college, the centre of moral and intellectual power for the great North West. Hanover Centre has furnished, on an average, one educated man annually, for the last three quarters of a century; among them, the Wrights, Fosters and others equally worthy of mention. Hollis alone has furnished forty men for the gospel ministry; and even Croydon, with scarcely enough church members left to tell the tale, has sent fourteen of her sons from home, as heralds of the cross. It is from these decaying communities that the Websters, the Woodburys, the Casses, the Bells, the Athertons, the Dixes and Fessendens came forth, "to govern men and guide the state." Many of the leading churches of New England are indebted to these churches among the hills for much of their strength and power. As the manufactories of Manchester, Lowell and Lawrence owe their existence to the streams that run among the hills, in Northern New-Hampshire, so those cities have derived many of their best citizens from the same region. The population,

like the waters, has gravitated toward the great centres of business ; and the country churches have become tributaries of the city churches.

The great West has, also, depleted the rural districts of our state. The hardy sons of New-Hampshire, inured to toil and hardship at home, have often taken the lead in founding new states, new churches and new colleges upon the more productive territories of the West. Educated in the free schools, the town meeting and the Congregational church, they have been among the foremost in promoting the establishment of similar institutions in their new homes. In the department of education, they have been specially prominent. Only two or at most three States of the Union have furnished a greater number of educated men, in proportion to their population, than New-Hampshire. A majority of these have earned the means of their education. A large number of the graduates of Dartmouth College have become teachers and ministers, and a majority of these have labored in the new states. Of the one hundred and twenty-five thousand emigrants from our state, now living, most of them have done good service for their country in all the great enterprises of the day, moral, social, material and religious. Though the old homesteads have declined by their loss, the new have flourished by their gain.

PURITANISM IN NEW-HAMPSHIRE.

Supposing the Puritans to have been such and so great as they have been represented to be, what has New-Hampshire to do with them ? Much, every way ; for though the early settlers of this state were neither Puritans nor Pilgrims, their laws, schools, religion and government were patterned after those of Massachusetts, and were thus a legitimate legacy from Puritanism. What was good or bad in the one state was equally good or bad in the other. The two states were under one government for nearly two generations of men ; and that, too, in the infancy of our republic, when the younger state would naturally imitate the older. Such was the result. The town, the school, the church and the state were identical in the two republics. New-Hampshire, therefore, quarried the corner stones of its political and

ecclesiastical structure from the mine of puritanism. Thus her origin was ennobled. The Puritans were simple in habits ; plain in dress ; bold in speech ; stern in morals ; bigoted in religion ; patient in suffering ; brave in danger, and energetic in action. But what have the clergy done for New-Hampshire ? Let us inquire what has been done in morals, religion and education ; and whatever that is, is chiefly due to them. Ministers of the gospel have been the originators and promoters of educational institutions. The common schools have been cherished, superintended and elevated by them. Academies have been built and sustained by their fostering care. It is hardly probable that an instance can be found in the history of our state, where an institution of learning, a social library, a lyceum or a literary association has been established without the active and constant support of the clergymen of the place. Ministers have been the models in style, pronunciation and delivery whom all the young lovers of oratory have imitated. The college was founded by a clergyman, and has, with a single exception, been presided over by clergymen. Its most active supporters have been from that profession. During the years of its sore trial, when the state attempted to seize its franchise, its chief defenders were Congregational clergymen. Dr. McFarland, at the risk of reputation and usefulness, sometimes wrote two columns a week in defence of the old board and their measures. Others fought in the same battle and with similar peril. The clergyman in every town has been among the first to discover and encourage rising merit among the sons and daughters of the flock. Hundreds of young men have received a liberal education through the aid and counsel of faithful pastors, who otherwise might have remained for life "mute and inglorious" upon their native hills. Dr. Samuel Wood, of Boscowen, during his long, successful ministry, fitted at his own home more than one hundred young men for college. Those who could not immediately pay one dollar a week for board and tuition, he trusted ; to some indigent students he forgave their debt. Upon the subjects of morals, religion, reforms and revivals, it is superfluous to speak in this connection. To recite what has been done in these respects by the ministers of all denominations would require a complete

history of the moral and spiritual progress of the state from its origin. The other learned professions have been co-workers with them ; but it is not my purpose to speak of them here and now. By such agencies as I have indicated New-Hampshire has risen to an honorable rank among her sister states. Her schools, academies and churches compare favorably with those of other more attractive portions of our country.



ESSAYS

READ BEFORE THE

General Association

OF

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

OF NEW YORK,

AT

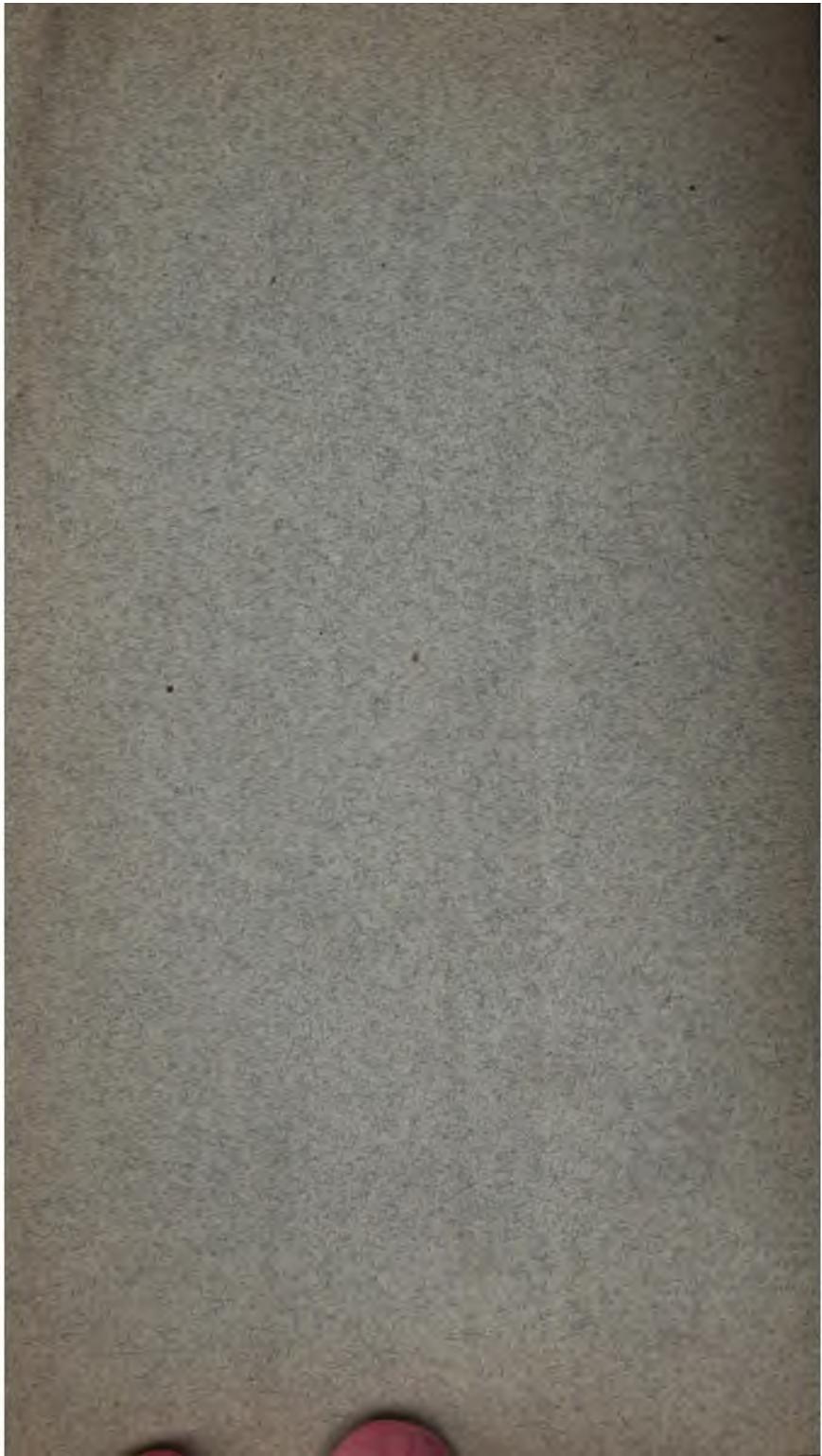
OSWEGO,

October 15th, 16th and 17th, 1878.

PRINTED BY VOTE OF THE ASSOCIATION.

SYRACUSE, N. Y.:

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